

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIVISION OF MEDICAL AND FORENSIC
SERVICES

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To: NHDOC Provider and Nursing Staff
From: T. Groblewski, DO, Chief Medical Officer
Date: December 11, 2020
Re: Coronavirus Tests—Clinical Guidance

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Groblewski', written over the 'From:' line of the header.

No clinical guideline takes the place of good clinical practice. Every case is unique. Always use your best clinical judgement when making medical decisions. Seek additional guidance as appropriate.

Patients with COVID-19 illness have reported a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Patients with these symptoms may have COVID-19 and should be immediately considered for medical isolation and for definitive testing:

- i. Fever equal to or greater than 100, or chills
- ii. Cough
- iii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- iv. Fatigue
- v. Muscle or body aches
- vi. Headache
- vii. New loss of taste or smell
- viii. Sore throat
- ix. Congestion or runny nose
- x. Nausea or vomiting
- xi. Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Testing should be determined by and ordered by a medical provider on a case-by-case basis. As a rule, flu and strep throat testing should be considered before making the decision whether or not to proceed with COVID-19 PCR testing.

New facility intakes (all types): PCR test day of booking (day 1), followed by 14-day quarantine.

Transitional Housing Units and Transitional Work Center residents: PCR test weekly.

Residents scheduled for external medical procedures: PCR testing in accordance with hospital request.

Residents who return from Hospital/ Clinic stays: Quarantine and PCR test (as appropriate) upon return if offsite experience presented high-risk exposure, i.e. multiple EDs, multiple hospital floor exposures, etc.

Pre-release and Pre-transfer: If time to release is not prohibitive, PCR test at the beginning of a 14-day quarantine period abutting the planned day of discharge.

Residents who present as ill:

If COVID-19 symptoms are present, test with the Binax NOW rapid test:

Positive result: no need to test with PCR test. Move forward with isolation of resident and identification of contacts.

Negative result: if the suspicion is high that the resident is ill with COVID-19 (ex: when loss of taste/smell is reported), utilize PCR test and maintain resident in isolation until results are available.

No symptoms, but identified as having close contacts, etc.:

(Utilization of antigen-based strategies is **NOT** recommended, therefore, only a PCR test should be utilized.)

Negative PCR: Maintain in quarantine for 14 days (separate from routine intake quarantine)

Positive PCR: Isolate resident and identify contacts (if resident was in a quarantine cohort when specimen was collected, the 14-day quarantine restarts once the resident is moved to isolation)

Criteria for discontinuing medical isolation of residents diagnosed with COVID-19:

For persons with mild to moderate COVID-19 illness, who are not severely immunocompromised, medical isolation can be discontinued when all of the following three criteria are present:

At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (or since first positive viral test was collected, if asymptomatic),

At least 24 hours have passed since last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and

Symptoms have improved.

For persons with severe illness, or who are severely immunocompromised, medical isolation can be discontinued when all of the following four criteria are present:

At least 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (or since first positive viral test was collected, if asymptomatic),

At least 24 hours have passed since last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and

Symptoms have improved.

Consultation with infection control experts.

References

Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

Interim Considerations for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Correctional and Detention Facilities Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/testing.html>

Interim Guidance on Management of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Correctional and Detention Facilities Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/guidance-correctional-detention.html>

Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>